

amdt of 11-18-03

Appln No. 09/882,154

Amdt date Novemb r 11, 2003

Reply to Office action of September 11, 2003

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-3, 7-8, 10-12, 15, 17-18, 22-25, 28 and 32-35 (Canceled).

Claims 4-6, 9, 13-14, 16, 19-21, and 29 as shown (Amended).

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) ~~A method~~ An apparatus according to claim [[1]] 26 wherein the gas is air.

5. (Currently amended) ~~A method~~ An apparatus according to claim [[1]] 26 wherein the gas is at a pressure suitable for removing slip sheets and injecting air between slip sheets and plates.

6. (Currently amended) ~~A method~~ An apparatus according to claim [[1]] 26 wherein the gas is at 80 psi.

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7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) ~~A method~~ An apparatus according to claim [[1]] 26 wherein the gas is [pulsed] delivered in pulses.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[12]] 26 wherein one of the at least one gas nozzles is a fan nozzle.

14. (Currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[12]] 26 wherein one of the at least one gas nozzles is a jet nozzle.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[15]] 26 wherein the plate handler area holds two stacks of plates interleaved with slip sheets.

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17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[15]] 26 wherein the plate handler area is separated from the discarded slip sheet holding bin by a plate which acts as a base of the handler area and a top of the holding bin.

20. (Currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[15]] 26 wherein a bottom front end of the cart is slanted at an outward angle to prevent discarded slip sheets from piling up at the front of the cart.

21. (Currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[15]] 26 wherein the back of the cart is removable to allow removal of discarded slip sheets.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously presented) An apparatus for separating slip sheets from plates comprising:

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a cart comprising a plate handler area to hold at least one stack of plates interleaved with slip sheets and a discarded slip sheet holding bin;

a movable head comprising at least one vacuum cup to acquire plates one at a time from the cart;

and at least one gas nozzle to create a layer of gas between the plates and the slip sheets and to blow the slip sheets into the holding bin wherein the head comprises a chute and a top of the chute comprises a baffle.

27. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the baffle has an angled front edge which further guides the slip sheet into the holding area.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[28]] 26 wherein plates are handled in an area defined by two side panels and a bottom plate.

30. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 29 wherein front end corners of the area are squared.

31. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 29 wherein front end corners of the area are squared and then taper off in order for the slip sheets to more easily pass through.

32. (Canceled)

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33. (Canceled)

34. (Canceled)

35. (Canceled)